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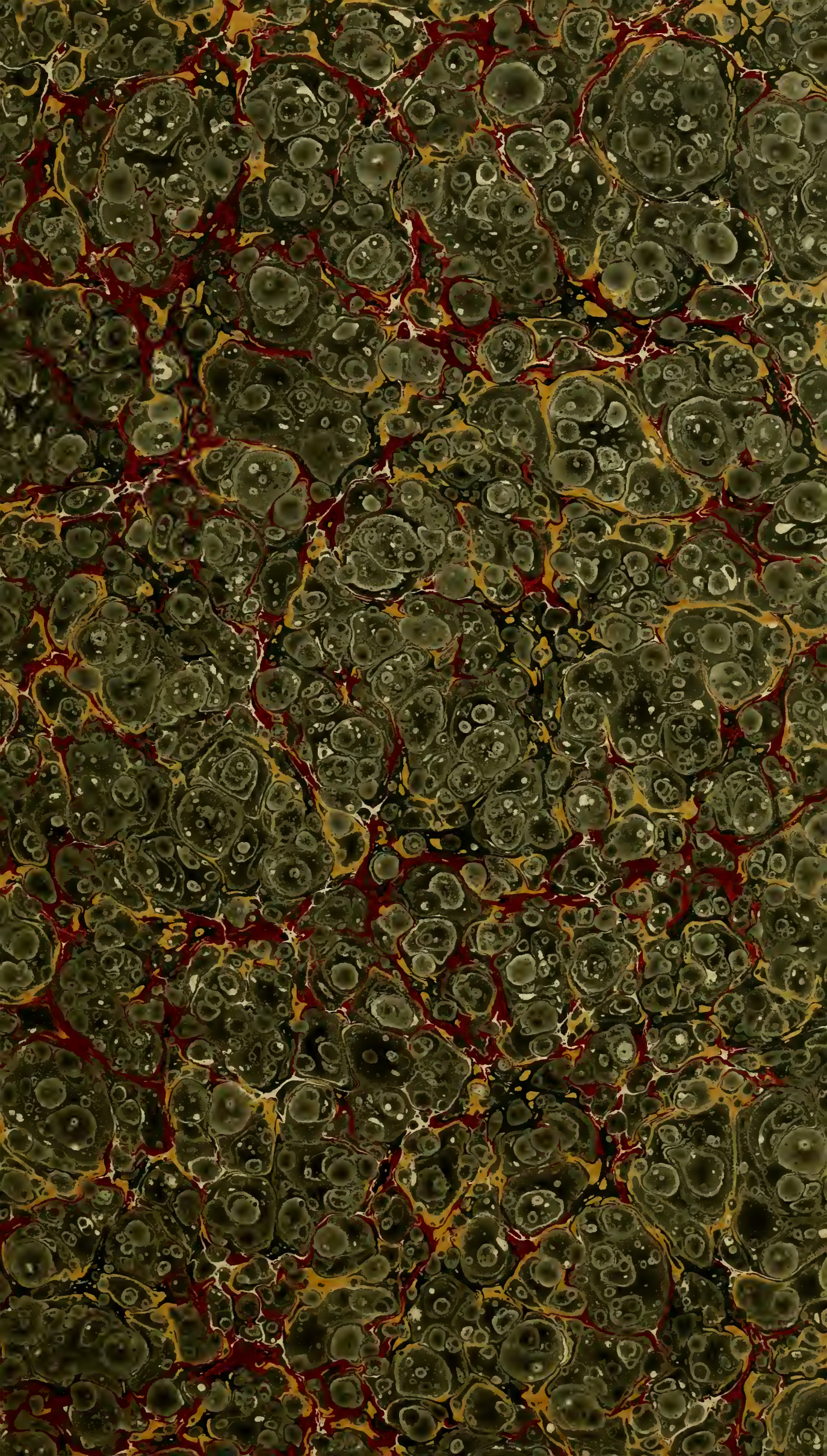
EMMA L. CONANT

IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND

**Lewis S. Conant**

1951









A

# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

# **WESTFIELD.**

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BY EMERSON DAVIS, A. M.

PRECEPTOR OF WESTFIELD ACADEMY.

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WESTFIELD :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH ROOT.

1826.

BOSTON: BOWEN & SON,  
COUNSELLOR OF COLLEGE ARMS  
CHURCH

### ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sketch has been composed with as much accuracy as the nature of the subject would admit. If inaccuracies are found they are chargeable to my informers and the records I have consulted, and not to my voluntary misrepresentation of facts. Doubtless many circumstances important to a complete history of the town are known to some individuals which are not noticed in this sketch.— Any information relative to the subject will be thankfully received.

E. DAVIS.

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH.

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### NAME.

THE Indian name of Westfield was Warronoco, (or kee) and was incorporated in 1669, Edward Tyng, being magistrate of the Massachusetts Colony. It was first proposed to call it Streamfield because situated between two streams, but upon further consideration it was called *Westfield* because it was nearly west from Boston the metropolis of the Colony, and also the most westerly plantation in New-England.

### FIRST SETTLEMENT.

It is difficult to determine in what precise year the first permanent settlement was made in this town; though probably between 1658 and 1660. At a town meeting held in Springfield Dec. 1658, a tract of land in Warronoco was granted to Thomas Cooper, on condition he commenced improvements upon said land in twelve months and continued them five years. This tract was situated "over west river," probably not far from the county bridge. A similar grant was made in 1660 to Deacon S. Chapman of land adjoining Cooper's. In 1661 a grant was made to Captain Pyncheon, Robert Ashley, and George Colton, of a tract of upland meadow, probably lying between the rivers.



It hence appears that Warronoco belonged to Springfield. It was included in the original grant made to the first settlers of that town by the king of England. It was first settled by families from Springfield. The following is among the early records of that town: "Feb. 7, 1664, at a general town meeting, Captain Pyncheon, Maj. Holyoke, and Messrs. Ely, Colton, and Cooley were chosen a standing committee to have the sole power to order matters concerning Warronoco, both for admittance of inhabitants and to grant lands, or for any other business that may concern that place and conduce to its becoming a town of itself." Some to whom grants of land were made forfeited their lands by a non-compliance with the conditions of the grantors. Lands were confirmed to those who continued their improvements five years. I find a record of a vote of confirmation of titles to the following persons, George and Isaac Phelps, Capt. Cook, Mr. Cornish, Thomas Dewy, J. Noble, David Ashley, John Hoyloke, John Ponder and John Ingersoll. These men lived near the confluence of Great and Little Rivers. They took up their residence here about 1666, as appears from the following facts. Meetings were first held here in 1667 on the sabbath. The first English child born here was Benj. Saxstone who died in 1754, aged 88 years, and was therefore born in 1666. A notice of this is found in some loose papers of the Rev. Mr. Ballentine.

I have been credibly informed that in a pamphlet published some years since, mention is made of the establishment of a trading house, at the confluence of the two riv-



ers, by three young men, some years previous to a permanent settlement. They spent one summer here, and were not heard of afterward. It was supposed they were cut off by the Indians. The pamphlet I have never seen.

Each inhabitant owned a separate tract of land, but seem at first to have lived to a certain extent in common. They had a fort near the junction of the rivers, as supposed a few rods west of Harrison's tavern. In this they lodged every night, and fled to it by day in case of alarm. It seems from the records that a tract of land two miles in circuit about the fort was strongly enclosed. Within this enclosure they had all their dwellings. Houses were occupied as forts in different parts of the town until since the French war in 1775.

Lands were not considered of great value. I find on the old record several votes like the following : " Voted, A.B. may have —— acres where he can find it."

Warronoco was at first nine miles long and three wide, additions were made to it until it included what is now Westfield, Southwick, and Russell. The part now Southwick was at first called "outer commons," and also a piece two miles in width from the north end of the town. The rest was called "inner commons". Southwick however soon lost the name of outer commons. The tract between Southwick meeting house and "poverty plains" was first settled about 1740.) Samuel Fowler father of the late Hon. Samuel Fowler was one of the first inhabitants, also Benjamin Loomis and a Mr. Olds. The south part towards Granby was settled about the same time by



families by the name of Moore and hence called Mooretown. The east part adjoining West Springfield and extending to West Suffield was called Long Yard. Southwick by an act of incorporation became a separate town in 1779. Russell was called the New-addition. The first settlers in that part were two brothers of the name of Barber, and a Mr. Grey. They lived upon the road leading from Westfield to Blandford by Sackett's and up the mountain then called Glasgow mountain. Russell was incorporated in 1792.

It is difficult to give at this remote period, any particular account of the difficulties the first settlers had to encounter. We can only infer them from a few insulated facts, which I will briefly notice, that the present inhabitants, many of whom are descendants of the first owners of the soil, may know the hardships their fathers endured to procure a peaceful residence for their posterity. They were a few families in a wilderness, then the accustomed haunts of wolves and bears, and a race of men more savage than the beasts that prowled in the forest. No habitation of civilized men to the west, small ones at Northampton and Hadley, at Springfield and Windsor, Conn. None of them were able to lend their aid for the protection of their neighbors in case of assault. They tilled their lands in company, while a few patrolled about them as sentinels. They carried their guns and ammunition with them to the field, and placed them near when they drew around the fireside with their families.



## PHILIP'S WAR.

No special harm was received from the Indians until the commencement of this war in 1675. I have compiled an account of the injuries received during this war from records kept by the Rev. Mr. Taylor. He remarks that they were sorely distressed yet sovereignly preserved. "Our soil," he says, "was moistened by the blood of three Springfield men, young Goodman Dumbleton, who came to our mill and two sons of Goodman Brooks, who came here to look for iron ore on land bought of Mr. J. Pyncheon who accompanied them, but they fell in the way by the first assault of the enemy. At the same time Mr. Cornish's house was burnt to ashes, and also John Sackett's house and barn with its contents, it being the first snowy day of winter. They also lodged a ball in Mr. Granger's leg. It was thought the enemy received some loss, because in the ashes of Mr. Cornish's house the bones of a man were found. Also in the winter some scattering rascals upon a Lord's day in the time of afternoon worship fired Mr. Ambrose Fowler's house and barn, and in the week after Mr. Walter Lee's barn. On the last snowy day we had in the winter of 1675, we discovering an end of the Indians did send out a scout to make a full discovery of the same, designing only three or four to go with orders not to assault them, but to our woe and smart there going ten or twelve, not as scouts, but as assailants, run furiously upon them and received from the enemy a furious charge whereby Mr. Moses Cook an inhabitant, and a soldier not an inhabitant were killed."



In the fall after nine men from Westfield, were at Deerfield at the time of an attack upon that place, three of whom were killed. The few families residing here during the war were so impoverished and distressed that some left, and all more than once were upon the point of relinquishing their lands and uniting with other plantations for the purpose of protection. Thus their lives were in constant jeopardy, they were few in the midst of savages, destitute of the luxuries and most of the comforts of life, contented with such food as their own valley produced. Previous to 1675 a grist mill and saw mill were erected on a brook emptying into the great river just below the County bridge. These mills were erected by a company of four men Mr. Whiting and three Dewys. The toll was regulated by a vote of the town. Debts were paid in grain or meat the price of which was also regulated by a vote of the town. In 1716 the price of Rye was three shillings, Corn two shillings and four-pence and Wheat and Peas four shillings and six-pence. When debts were paid in money a discount of one fourth was made by the creditor in all cases. The creditor was obliged to take what was offered in payment money or grain. Besides grain, tar and turpentine were also an article of traffic being manufactured by the inhabitants. Persons paid into the town treasury two shillings for every hundred boxes they employed in collecting turpentine from the white pine.

#### INDIAN MISCELLANY.

There was an old Indian whom they called Grey Lock



that produced considerable commotion among the people. He was constantly skulking about, way-laying them for the purpose of taking captives. He caught a young lad by the name of Loomis, who went out of the fort in the early part of the evening to get cherries. He was soon released. Mr. Bently in the east part of the town worked at ditching all of one summer. He uniformly set his loaded gun one rod before him and when he had cut his ditch up to the gun, would move it forward again, but the next year he was taken. Grey Lock said he had watched for an opportunity to take him all the year previous, but could not ; he might have killed him but he wanted captives. Mr. Bently was afterwards released. Mr. Noble, who lived near where Mr. Ambrose Day now lives, was much exposed. One night during family prayers Grey Lock stepped up and pulled the string and let the door swing open, some of the family shut the door, and as soon as all was quiet he would pull the string again. Mr. Noble was persuaded by his friends to move into town. Grey Lock said he had several opportunities of killing most of his children at a shot but did not want scalps so much as captives.

Mr. Phelps who lived in Shepard-lane returning from work at Pochasuck, came to the fording place of Great River, and saw three Indians in the river. He considered his situation perilous. They were coming towards him. He clapped his hands and exclaimed "here they are my brave boys, rush on, we have them," at which the Indians took the alarm and escaped.

Noah Ashley of whom mention is made in another place returning from work at Pochasuck was met by an Indian near the Bancroft house. Both drew up their guns, but Ashley fired first and the Indian fled. He was tracked by blood through the brush to a place near by, but was never found. The plain has ever since been called "Indian plain."

A daughter of the second wife of a Mr. Sackett (her name I do not know) was taken captive by the Indians and carried to the Northwest part of New York, married an Indian, and remained among them as long as she lived. Her descendants have been here to see their mother's friends several times since the French war. Previous to that they used some exertions to make others of the Sackett family captives but did not succeed.

About the time of the French war a man was killed at the Farms while looking for his cow, and another at Southampton. He was in a barn threshing, with his gun standing near, but as he turned his back to the door, he was fired upon by the Indian and killed.

A signal was given on the discovery of Indians in the vicinity by twice firing a gun. An alarm of this kind was once given and the central village was deserted by all the male inhabitants; while absent a company of Indians appeared on the bank south of the town with the intention, as it afterwards appeared, to make a hostile attack but were deterred, on seeing the number of the houses and smoke curling from every chimney, through fear of finding the whites of superior strength. Thus the town was



providentially preserved, when four or five might have laid it in ashes. I have been informed that two tribes wandered about in this vicinity. The rivers afforded fish in great variety in those days such as bass, salmon, shad, &c. and the forests abounded with bears, deer, &c. while on the meadows and plains maize was easily cultivated. A field on Little River now called Squawfield was probably cultivated by them. There arrow heads and other Indian utensils were formerly found in abundance. There is a collection of there utensils in the Academy, together with an Indian's head, the bones of the skull and face nearly perfect said to have been dug up in the vicinity of Harrison's tavern. Very few facts relative to the aborigines have been recorded, and therefore I am able to give only a very brief account of them at this period.

#### OTHER MISCELLANIES.

Among the first settlers we find the names of Dewey, Sackett, Phelps, Ashley, Ingersoll, Cooke, Fowler, Weller, Nell (or Neel or Neal) &c. There were three Fowlers among the first inhabitants, John, Samuel and Ambrose, probably brothers. John was married in 1689 of whom the late Deacon Ebenezer Fowler was a descendant. Samuel was married in 1681 of whom the late Hon. Samuel Fowler was a descendant. Samuel Fowler father of the Hon. Samuel Fowler was married in 1734 and settled in the north part of Southwick, then called poverty, from which time we may date the first settlement of that town. The other Fowlers of this town are the descendants of Ambrose who was married in 1693.

The late Doctor Israel Ashley was the great-grandson of David Ashley one of the first settlers. Major Noah Ashley who shot the Indian at Pochasuck was a descendant of David Ashley. He was killed in the French war in 1775 between Fort Edward and Lake George. A party of our men on a march between these places were attacked by surprise by a company of French and Indians and most of them killed or taken prisoners. Captain Jonathan Ingersoll and Richard Campbell of this town were killed at the same time. Two or three Westfield men escaped that massacre. John Ashley Esq. another of this family was appointed by Gov. Belcher, about 1735 to treat with the Hoosatonnuc Indians. He purchased of them a strip of land two miles in width and twenty-six in length extending from Westfield to Hoosatonnuc now Sheffield.

The Shepards settled here about 1700. The Hon. William Shepard was a son of Deacon John Shepard. He was born in 1737 and enlisted in the army at the age of 17. When 21 he was a Lieut. in the army commanded by Gen. Abercrombie, and when 22 he had a Captain's commission under Gen. Amherst. He was in the French war six years. He was in the battles fought at Fort William Henry, Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Isle aux Noix, St. Johns, and Montreal. At the close of the war he returned home to the enjoyment of domestic life, and continued with his family until the commencement of the revolutionary struggle. In 1775 he repaired to Roxbury with the Commission of Lieut. Col. and continued under the command and near the person of Washington. He aided in bring-



ing our troops from Long Island. In 1780 he had a General's commission under La Fayette and continued in that station until the close of the war. He fought in twenty-two battles, and established a high character for bravery, sound judgement and humanity. At the close of the war "he returned like Cincinnatus to his plough." On his return home, he was appointed to fill offices of honor and trust, being Major General of the Militia, a senator in the state Legislature, and a Representative to Congress. He was appointed by the Governor of Mass. to treat with the Penobscot Indians, and by the National Government to treat with the Six Nations. The prominent traits in his character were sound judgement, undaunted courage and unbending integrity. He was a lover of his country and a cordial friend of the kingdom of the Redeemer. He held the office of a deacon in the church 28 years. He died in 1817, aged 80 years. His widow is still living. This is compiled from a sermon preached at his funeral by the Rev. Isaac Knapp.

Among the officers in the revolutionary war from this town besides Gen. Shepard, were Maj. Wareham Parks, afterwards Gen., Capt. John Gray and Lieut. David Sackett. A few from this town spilt their blood in their country's defence. Abijah Dewy was killed at Roxbury near Boston neck. The ball struck his breast and literally tore him to pieces—James Ashley, Jared Noble and a Mr. Rogers were killed at the defeat of Col. Brown. There are a few men living in town who were out in the militia, or in the army one campaign, but only one, Mr. Russell


Dewy, who was out during the war. He was at the battle of Bunker Hill, took his station at the rail fence, and held his ground till he had fired away 13 of the 17 cartridges he carried into the field. He was at some other battles—One year he was absent from the army on account of sickness.

#### TOPOGRAPHY.

Westfield is situated eight miles west of Connecticut River, separated from it by West-Springfield. Little River comes in from the west and Westfield River from the north-west, they unite half a mile east of the Meeting-house. The central part of the town has the appearance of having once been a lake, and by geologists acquainted with the country is supposed to have been at some remote period covered with water. It is surrounded by an abrupt bank from 20 to 70 feet in height. In a few places as in the north-west extremity there is no well defined bank, but a gradual rise to the plains. Here the water of the lake must have been shallow. The bank in some places is clayey, in others gravelly and in others rocky. The lake must have been about seven miles in length from north-west to south-east and nearly three in width at the widest place, which is from the sandy bank near Mr. Frederic Fowler's to the high bank south of Ponder's hollow, so called, because a family of that name lived there. In this part it was the deepest. The eastern extremity was at the toll bridge where it was narrow and probably 40 feet deep. The north-western extremity was near Wheaton's at the foot of Mount Tekoa. At this place Westfield River en-



ters. One stream only issued from the lake which was at the toll bridge. The Mount Tom range crosses here ; the mountain on each side of the stream at this place is composed of gravel with rocks embosomed, east from this the descent of the stream is rapid. The part of the town contained within the banks might be inundated by raising a dam at this place 40 feet high. Such an appearance as I have here described, leads me to suppose this valley once the bed of a lake. It is not necessary to suppose any unusual convulsion of nature to have operated in emptying this lake. The constant abrasion of a stream of water upon a gravelly barrier whose impetuosity must have been augmented vastly by the floods to which this valley is to this day subject, must have been sufficient to remove the opposing mound of earth, leaving the whole body of water in the lake, to roll in one desolating torrent down the valley of the Connecticut. Long lake in Vermont, was emptied of its waters in 1810 by the abrasion of a stream flowing in a small channel cut through a ridge of gravel at its northern extremity. Beneath the alluvial soil in this valley, whose depth is various, is a strata of water worn pebbles, beneath this a strata of quicksand, which renders it necessary to curb many of the wells. Rising upon the bank the soil immediately changes from a rich alluvial to a sandy plain covered once with yellow and pitch pines. These plains are of great extent for the most part uninhabited, and produce rye, corn and buck-wheat. They yield from six to fourteen bushels per acre.



A ridge of hills a branch of the Green mountains skirts the western border of the town. Westfield River enters through a notch in this mountain. On the north side of the River, at the north-west extremity of the supposed lake is Mount Tekoa, the highest mountain in the vicinity. It is nearly as high as Mount Tom. It rises from the river very steep, rocky and sparsely covered with stunted pines. The view from this mountain is very fine, and will richly repay the labor of ascent. The circle of vision is about 35 miles in diameter. For the most part a woodland scene, with here and there a village church, a neat farm house embosomed in a cluster of trees, a well cultivated farm with cattle roaming over the hills, a lowly cottage, and a stream whose sparkling waters are at one time seen slowly meandering through the meadows, at another swollen by the mountain torrent and bearing on its dark and heaving surges the wreck of bridges and mills and sweeping with them the herds that graze upon its banks.

One mile further up the river is Salmon Falls. The scenery at this place is very beautiful. The stream is compressed and forced through a narrow passage tumbling and foaming for several rods. It is admirable rather for its wildness, than regularity. Often rainbows are seen in the spray rising from it, especially in the early part of the afternoon. From several points upon the bank surrounding the town we have good views of the village.

#### MINERAL AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS.

Limestone is found in the west part of the town though not yet in quantities sufficient for quarrying. In the vi-



cinity of the Limestone is found a beautiful, black Serpentine which might be turned and used for ornamental work of various kinds. In the low grounds red sandstone is the principal rock. It has a coarse, conglomerate texture and is hewed for under pinning stone. At the foot of Salmon Falls is a quarry of Mica Slate suitable for paving side walks. It will probably be of some value when the canal is opened.

Westfield furnishes a greater variety of vegetable productions than most towns on account of having such varieties of soil; sandy plains, mountains, meadows and swamps. We have here about 60 varieties of meadow grass some of which have been found no where besides in North America. Alders, poplars and willows blossom about the middle of March. Chesnut fencing stuff is brought from the neighboring mountains and lumber from the towns west and north. The elm, buttonwood and maple grow luxuriantly in this valley.

#### EDUCATION.

The first settlers of this town, like their cotemporaries, made special exertions for the education of their children. They employed from the beginning a schoolmaster six months usually, and at a later period through the year. The salary per year was from 38 to 50£ paid in grain or money. A greater sum than is paid school teachers at the present day. The selectmen were the school committee. For a century all the children attended one school—now there are fifteen school houses. The instructor was usually a man competent to instruct in the dead languages. A

woman's school was first kept in 1726 by the Widow Catherine Noble. She was paid twenty-five shillings per month. The families over Little River had a school kept among them a few weeks in some years. The town allowed them £3, as their portion of the money. None were unable to read and write, though the education of females was limited. At the present day the standard of education is lower than it should be. Thorough and competent instructors need be employed, whose aim and desire shall be to advance their pupils in the rudiments of useful knowledge. The public schools usually continue half of the year. Some exertions are now making in consequence of a recent act of the legislature to raise the standard of education in our common schools, which it is hoped will have a salutary tendency.

*Westfield Academy* was chartered in 1796 and opened for the admission of students in Jan. 1800. Preceptors have been employed by the year and seldom continued longer, against which practice experience teaches this objection, that men so employed are inexperienced in a great degree, and will not feel the interest in the welfare of the institution that a permanent instructor must feel. This Academy has received less injury from this source than could reasonably have been expected. It has always had a respectable number of students varying from 30 to 100. A female has always been employed half of the year. This Academy has been greatly benefited by the interest taken in its welfare by the inhabitants of the town. The following gentlemen have been Preceptors. Those in Ital-



ics are now clergymen. Peter Starr, Henry C. Martindale since a member of Congress, *Lyman Strong*, Alfred Perry M. D. *Horatio Waldo*, *Saul Clark*, Theodore North, *Sylvester Selden*, *Francis L. Robbins*, *Samuel M. Emerson*, Alfred Stearns, *Charles Jenkins*, *Stephen Taylor*, *Flavel S. Gaylord*, George W. Benedict, now Professor of Mathematics, &c. in Vermont University, *Elnathan Gridley* now Missionary to Palestine, *Alvan Wheeler*, M. D. Emerson Davis and *Parsons Cooke*. All are graduates of Williams College except *Elnathan Gridley*, who graduated at Yale.

The building was repaired in 1824. It has two school rooms on the lower floor and on the other a large hall and lecture room. The institution is furnished with a sufficient quantity of Chemical and Philosophical apparatus for illustrating the general principles of those sciences. There is also a respectable collection of minerals for the use of the Academy. Instruction is given in the departments of Natural History to those who wish. The writer has had the charge of the institution since 1824. Terms continue eleven weeks—tuition is \$3 per quarter. During the Fall, Winter and Spring quarters 25 cents in addition is paid for fuel, sweeping, bell ringing, &c. Present number of students 110. About 3000 have been educated at this Academy since its establishment, many of whom held conspicuous stations in public life, and many others are useful members of society. The funds of the Academy are \$5000.

The following gentlemen from this town have received a collegiate Education.

*Jonathan Ashley* a son of Jonathan Ashley, graduated at Yale College in 1730 at the age of 18. He studied theology and was settled in the ministry at Deerfield.

*Israel Ashley*, son of Deacon David Ashley and grandson of David Ashley one of the first settlers, graduated at Yale College in 1730 at the age of 21. He was a physician of great celebrity, settled in this town, and died at Stillwater N. Y. 1758 surgeon of a regiment.

*Joseph Ashley*, son of Samuel Ashley, graduated at Yale College in 1731 at the age of 22. He studied theology and settled in the ministry at Sunderland.

*Gideon Noble* son of Martin Noble, graduated at Yale College in 1755. He was settled in the ministry at Willington, Connecticut.

*John Strong*, son of Ezra Strong, graduated at Yale College in 1766. After leaving College he removed to Pittsfield and kept a public house for some years.

*Israel Mosely*, son of Israel Mosely graduated at Yale College in 1766. He studied no profession, but directed his attention chiefly to agriculture, in the latter part of his life he was a cripple and died in 1824.

*David Shepard*, son of Deacon John Shepard graduated at Yale College in 1766. He studied medicine, practiced a while in Chester, and removed to Amsterdam N. Y. where he died in 1819.

*Moses Ashley*, son of Moses Ashley graduated at Yale College in 1767 at the age of 18. He resided in Stockbridge after he left college and was drowned in the Hoosatonuc.



*Israel Ashley*, son of Doctor Israel Ashley, graduated at Yale College in 1767. He studied medicine, and resided in this town till his death in 1814. He was a physician of considerable celebrity.

*John Ballentine*, son of Rev. John Ballentine, graduated at Harvard University in 1768. He studied theology and preached a number of years. He was never settled over any parish and is still living.

*Samuel Fowler*, son of Samuel Fowler, graduated at Yale College in 1768. He studied law and commenced practice in this town, but at the beginning of the revolutionary war suspended his business and found employ in the army. At the close of the war he commenced agricultural and mercantile pursuits, and was afterwards a member of the legislature, and one of the Governor's Council. He died in 1823.

*William G. Ballentine*, son of the Rev. John Ballentine, graduated at Harvard University in 1771. Studied theology and settled at Washington, Ms. and died 1820.

*Warham Parks*, son of Elisha Parks graduated at Harvard University in 1772. He studied no profession. He went into the army of the revolution with a Major's Commission. At the close of the war he directed his attention to agricultural pursuits. Died 1801 aged 49.

*Ebenezer Ballentine*, son of the Rev. John Ballentine graduated at Yale in 1777. He studied medicine and settled at Schoodich in N. Y. afterwards removed to Marion, Ohio and died 1823.

*Seth Noble*, son of Thomas Noble, graduated about this time, at what College I cannot learn. He was a minister in the Province of Maine, afterwards settled at Montgomery and finally removed to Ohio, where he died a few years since. He was a man of uncommon activity.

*Gerard Root*, son of Martin Root, also graduated at some College, I know not where. After leaving College he was in the army in the vicinity of Saratoga and finally settled in the western part of New York.

*Saul Fowler*, son of Daniel Fowler, graduated at Yale College in 1784. He never studied a profession. He is now living in Southwick and is one of the Deacons of the congregational church. *Or. Ap. 13*

*John Taylor*, son of Eldad Taylor Esq. graduated at Yale College in 1784. He studied theology and was settled at Deerfield. His health became feeble and he lost his voice, and in consequence of which he was dismissed. Afterwards he resided in Enfield, Ct. till he regained his health and is now living at Mendon, N. Y. and preaches part of the time.

*John Phelps*, son of John Phelps Esq. graduated at Harvard University in 1787. He studied law and practiced for several years in West-Granville where he still resides. When old Hampshire County was divided he was appointed High Sheriff of Hampden County which office he still holds.

*John Ingersoll*, son of John Ingersoll graduated at Yale College in 1790. He studied law and practiced in this town for several years. When the County was divided



he was appointed County Clerk for Hampden which office he now holds and resides in Springfield.

*Samuel Mather*, son of Doctor Samuel Mather graduated at Yale College in 1784. He studied law, but died in 1789, aged 25.

*Royal Phelps*, son of John Phelps graduated at Yale College in 1801. He studied theology and preached awhile, but was never settled over any congregation. He resides in the western part of New York. *cl. in Nov. 1831.*

*James Taylor*, son of Col. James Taylor, graduated at Williams College in 1804. He studied theology and is now the clergyman of Sunderland. *50*

*Daniel Mosely*, son of Pliny Mosely graduated at Williams College in 1806. He studied law and is now in practice at Canadaigua, N. Y. Sybil Mosely the wife of the Rev. Hiram Bingham, missionary to the Sandwich Islands is his sister.

*William Atwater*, son of the Rev. Noah Atwater, graduated at Yale College in 1807. He studied medicine and is one of the practising physicians in this town.

*James Fowler*, son of the Hon. Samuel Fowler, graduated at Yale College in 1807. He studied law, but has followed agricultural pursuits ever since. He has been a senator in the Massachusetts Legislature and is now one of the Governor's Council.

*Moses Clark*, son of a Mr. Clark who moved into town a few years since but soon died, graduated at Harvard University in 1819. He completed a theological course at Andover and went to Louisiana, with the intention of spend-

*1823 Sept 27. 28 30*

ing a number of years. He died near Natchitoches with the fever in 1824<sup>34</sup>. He was a young man of more than ordinary talents.

*Warham Crooks*, son of Deacon John Crooks, graduated at Yale College in 1818, studied law and is settled in business at Springfield.

*Matthew Ives*, son of Major Matthew Ives, graduated at Yale College in 1824 and is now reading law.

*Samuel Perry*, who was originally from the State of New York, graduated at Yale College in 1824. He studied theology and was licenced last Spring. He is now preaching in New Hampshire.

*Iiram Smith*, son of Simon Smith, graduated at Amherst College in 1824. He studied theology awhile with a Clergyman and was licenced, afterwards spent a year at Auburn Theological Seminary, and is now preaching as a candidate.

*William G. Bates*, son of Elijah Bates, Esq. graduated at Yale College in 1825. He is now reading law.

*Seth Mosely*, son of William Mosely graduated at Union College in 1826. He is now reading law.

The above includes all the graduates of Colleges that I am able to find. Roland Parks, Samuel Fowler Jr. William Mosely Jr. Israel G. Ashley, Virgil Holland and Charles A. Jessup, completed only a part of their College course, most of them leaving on account of ill health.

Henry B. King, son of Henry King, and Joseph M. Ely for some years past a resident in this town, are now members of the Sophomore Class in Yale College.



## POPULATION.

In 1671 this town contained 10 families, in 1754, 157 and in 1790, 248. In 1790 the number of inhabitants was 2224—in 1800, 2148—in 1810, 2130—and in 1820, 2668. The population is now probably not far from 3000.

## SICKNESS AND MORTALITY.

The small Pox prevailed in 1722, 1778, 1817, and 1818. The influenza in 1789 prevailed extensively in the United States, and laid the foundation for many cases of consumption. It prevailed again in 1826. A slow fever proved fatal to numbers in the autumn of 1791. In 1803, 75 died mostly of the dysentery. More in former years died of consumption than of any one disorder, latterly more of fevers. The number of deaths in 42 years past has been 1237. The average number per year is 29 1-2, more than 1 to a 100. About one fourth of the deaths are of those under ten years of age. None in this time have reached the age of 100; 20 have died between 90 and 100.

## METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA.

In May 1792 two shocks of an Earthquake were experienced in this place by which buildings were considerably shaken. The weather for three weeks previous had been warm and no rain had fallen. One afternoon in 1756 there was a shock, so severe that bricks were shaken from chimneys. The rivers which run through this town on account of the proximity of the mountains are much swollen by thaws and rains. The water rises sometimes 14 feet; and near one half of the valley is inundated. Such floods occurred in 1819 and in 1826. Bridges,

buildings, cattle and fences were swept away and a strata of sand spread over the meadow lands.

In nine years from Jan. 1765, to Jan. 1795 the average number of inches that fell in rain was 37, the average number of inches of snow during the same time was 53 1-2, 1775 was remarkable for the great quantity of rain that fell, it being 51 3-4 inches and the snow 52 inches. In 1793 only 21 inches of rain fell. Four inches of snow is equivalent to one of water.

We had tornadoes that did considerable damage in 1804, 1815, and in 1821. The average temperature of the atmosphere is about 50 degrees Fahrenheit. July is the warmest month and January the coldest—we usually have the coldest days however in February and the warmest in June. Most of this article is compiled from papers left by the Rev. Noah Atwater.

#### MANUFACTURE.

Soon after the first settlement of the town tar was manufactured. Grist mills and saw mills were erected. It seems from some records that people came here to mill from Springfield. A cotton factory was erected some years since on Great River, but was destroyed by fire and has not been rebuilt. The principal article of manufacture at present is whips—great quantities are made and carried to various parts of the country. This business furnishes employ for two or three hundred people. The manufacture of harness-trimmings, harnesses, cigars, leather shoes, hats, waggons, cabinet furniture, distillation of spirits &c. &c. employs a great number of the inhabitants.



giving activity to mercantile business, and opening a ready market for the farmer's produce.

Westfield from its local situation commands considerable trade from the neighboring towns. The Hampden Bank located in this town commenced its operation in Jan. 1836. It has a capital of \$100,000, considerable part of which is owned in town. The Farmington Canal in its continuation to Northampton passes through this village. The survey has been made, a Canal Company incorporated, the stock taken up, and the whole route of the Canal let out to Messrs. Hurd, Sheldon and Shepard. The excavation commenced the first of November.

A Printing Office was put in operation in Feb. 1834, at which the *Hampden Register* is published by Mr. Joseph Root, at present edited by Dr. Job Clark.

#### ECCLIASTICAL HISTORY.

Meetings were first held on the sabbath in this town in 1667. Mr. Holyoke, son of Major J. Holyoke of Springfield, conducted them, whether he was a clergyman or layman I do not know. He however performed all the duties of a clergyman. After him a Mr. Fiske preached here as a candidate for settlement. Until within less than one hundred years people were called together on the Sabbath by the beat of a drum. A man was employed for that purpose and was paid 25 shillings per year. The first Meeting-house stood near Jedediah Taylor's Esq. Its site is now in the bed of Little River. A second house was built in 1720—considerable difficulty was experienced in fixing its location. It was left to several committees from

abroad, from whose opinion the town saw fit to dissent and finally erected it near Jeremiah Mosely's—it was destroyed by fire. The present Congregational Meeting-house was built in the year 1805.

In 1678 permission was granted by the Gov. of Massachusetts Colony to organize a church in Warronnoco. Mr *Edward Taylor*, was a candidate for settlement. He came here in 1671 and continued to preach as a candidate, his settlement being deferred on account of the distresses occasioned by Phillip's war. A council was convened on the last Wednesday of ~~June~~ 1679, the church organized, and Mr. Taylor ordained pastor. Mr. Taylor was from England, spent seven years at Cambridge University in England, after his arrival in America he entered Harvard University and spent three years, completing the regular course of study required in the English University. He took his degree at Harvard in 1671 and came here that autumn at the solicitation of a committee sent to the Bay for the purpose of procuring a preacher. He was married in 1674 to Miss Elizabeth Fitch, who died in 1689, and his second wife in 1729. One of his daughters married Mr. Stiles and was the mother of President Stiles of Yale College. Mr. T. was a man eminently devoted to the work of the ministry, of uniform, deep and consistent piety, and unwearied in his exertion to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of his people. Besides performing the duties of a pastor, and managing his domestic concerns he left 14 quarto volumes closely written of about 400 pages each. (They were not published) His salary at first was



£ 50, in 1686 it was increased to £ 80 ; he was also furnished with a small tract of land and his parishioners built him a house. His salary was paid in grain or money according to the usage of those days. Mr. Taylor died June 29, 1729 in the 50th year of his ministry, on the account of the infirmities of age he had not preached for four or five years. The following is the inscription upon his monument.

Here lies the body of the Rev. Edward Taylor,  
the aged, the venerable, the learned and  
pious pastor of the church in this town,  
who after he had served God  
faithfully and his gener-  
ation fell asleep  
June 29, 1729.

Previous to the death of Mr. Taylor some unsuccessful efforts were made to settle a colleague. They finally united in the settlement of the Rev. *Nehemiah Bull*, he was ordained Oct. 1726. He graduated at Yale College in 1723, he kept a grammar school in this town and preached half the time for some months before his settlement. He was married in 1728 to Miss E. Partridge, of Hatfield and died April 1740 in the 14th year of his ministry. Mr. Bull was a man of respectable talents and had the confidence of the public. During his ministry a mission to the Hoosatonuc Indians was commenced. Mr. Hopkins, of West-Springfield having learnt something of their condition and of their willingness to receive religious in-

ish them with such instruction. Mr. Hopkins being taken sick, the Rev. gentlemen Bull of Westfield and Williams of Deerfield, were appointed by Gov. Belcher in 1734 to superintend the mission. They procured the Rev. J. Sargeant, then a tutor in Yale College. He came immediately to Westfield, and was accompanied to Hoosatonuc by Mr. Bull. There was at that time 1735 only one house between here and Sheffield. Mr. Bull after introducing Mr. Sargeant to the Indians remained some days and baptized the first Indian convert.

Rev. *John Ballentine*, the successor of Mr. Bull, was a native of Boston and graduated at Harvard University in 1735 and was ordained pastor of this church and society June 17th, 1741, and died Feb. 12th 1776 in the 35th year of his ministry. His wife was a Miss Gay of Dedham. There was an unpleasant occurrence at his ordination. Several churches were sent to for assistance. The council convened agreeable to request, but not agreeing respecting the mode of ordination a part of the council withdrew leaving the pastors and delegates of only three churches to ordain Mr. Ballentine. No objection was alleged against Mr. Ballentine by those who withdrew. Mr. Ballentine was a man of respectable talents, and excelled I should judge in his knowledge of the ancient languages. He was attentive to the spritual interest of his peoples, always present to adminster counsel to the sick, and to offer his prayers in their behalf.

Rev. *Noah Theater*, the successor of Mr. Ballentine was born at Hampden, Conn. once a part of New Haven



and graduated at Yale College in 1774. He immediately entered upon his theological studies, and, soon after he was licenced preached here as a candidate for settlement, but on account of the distresses occasioned by the revolutionary war and the prevalence of the small pox the settlement of a minister was deferred. In 1788 he returned to Yale College where he was employed as a tutor for about three years. He then received a call to settle here in the ministry, which call he accepted, and was ordained Nov. 21, 1781. He died Jan. 25, 1802, after having preached to his people 20 years. His last sermon was preached Nov. 22, 1801, and was published. From his funeral sermon preached by Dr. Lathrop of West-Springfield, I make a few brief extracts—"Mr. Atwater was blessed with superior abilities, a clear understanding, a capacious mind and solid judgement. He was a distinguished scholar and learned divine." He was given to hospitality, remarkably tender of character, a wise and pacific counsellor in the churches, and filled up his time with assiduity. In proof of this latter trait of his character I mention the following circumstances. He never preached the same sermon to his people twice, always kept twenty sermons before hand, and completed his two sermons for the Sabbath on Tuesday evening, leaving the remainder of the week for visiting and domestic concerns. He always rose before sunrise at all seasons of the year. He was a man of a philosophical mind and kept a record of astronomical and meteorological phenomena—most of his papers upon these subjects fell into the hands of the late President Dwight.

The Rev. *Isaac Knapp*, the present minister of this society is a native of Norfolk, Ct. He graduated at Williams College in 1800, and was a tutor of the same in 1802 and 1803—He was ordained over this church and people Nov. 16th, 1803.

The church at its first organization consisted of about ten members. The present number of communicants is three hundred.

There have been twenty-five deacons, formerly they received ordination.

It will be seen by the above records that all the clergymen settled here have continued ministers of the society until removed by death. An ecclesiastical council has never been called to this town, except to organize the churches and ordain its ministers.

#### BAPTIST SOCIETY.

The Baptist Society of Westfield, was organized and a church formed in 1784. The society is composed of families from Montgomery, Russell, and Westfield. They have two Meeting-houses, one on Little River, near the centre of the town, built from the remains of a house which formerly stood near the county bridge ; their other house is five miles from the centre of the town on the west street of that part of the town called the Farms near Montgomery. It was built in 1820—near this the pastor resides and generally preaches in each house alternately.

\* Rev. Adam Hamilton was the first pastor of this church. He was a native of England, and for a long time highly esteemed by the baptist connexions. On account of mis-

\* D.D. in Chestnut 1828  
apt 83-



conduct he was rejected from the fellowship of the Baptist churches, and lost his reputation. He died at Chesterfield the present year, and it is charitably hoped he was a true penitent for some years previous to his death.

On account of Mr. Hamilton's misconduct the church become nearly extinct. They were destitute of a stated pastor and seldom, it seems held meetings on the Sabbath. The Baptist cause was revived again, and a new church organized in May 1806 consisting of 11 males and 7 females. In 1807 Mr. Azariah Hawks was ordained pastor of the society and continued his labors about two and a half years, then removed to Euclid, Ohio, where he still resides. During his ministry 50 were added to the church many of whom were members of Mr. Hamilton's church. The church remained without a pastor many years, having occasionally preaching from the neighboring ministers. In 1812, 60 were added to their church as the fruits of a revival in that year. After this Caleb Green preached for some time though he did not have any formal connexion with the society until 1818, and in 1819 he was dismissed and removed to Newport, R. I. He has since removed to Waterford, N. Y. where he now resides.

In 1819 at which time there was an extensive revival in this town, Mr. David Wright commenced preaching here, and has continued their stated pastor until the present time. He was ordained Nov. 1819. The whole number of admissions to the church since its formation has been 347, 75 by letter and the remainder by immersion. One hundred and forty-four have been separated from the church by

death, by removal to other places and on account of unchristian conduct, leaving 203 at present members.

This notice of the Baptist church was furnished by the Rev. David Wright.

#### METHODIST SOCIETY.

There is a small Methodist society which hold meetings regularly on the Sabbath, and are supplied with preachers a part of the time. How long it has existed I do not know, though not many years.

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### SOUTHWICK.

The population of Southwick in 1810 was 1229, and in 1820, 1255. The average number of deaths for several years past has been 14 ; a little more than 1 to 100. The first Meeting-house was erected one mile south of the village. I am not informed in what year, probably soon after the town was incorporated. It was burnt about the commencement of the year 1823, and a new one erected in 1824. It is a very elegant church and was dedicated in December of that year. A Methodist Episcopal church was erected in 1824 in the south part of the town. A Baptist church was built in the central village about 1822.

The first minister settled over the congregational society was the Rev. *Abel Forward*. He was a native of Simsbury, Con. and graduated at Yale College in 1768 and was ordained Oct. 27, 1773. He was a faithful minister, use-



ful in life, and died in the faith of the gospel, Jan. 1786, much lamented by his people.

Rev. *Isaac Clinton* graduated at Yale College in 1786, and was ordained pastor of the church in Southwick, Jan. 1788. He published a treatise on Infant Baptism which went through two editions. The first was published in a pamphlet, the second in a duodecimo volume and bound. It is a work of merit. In 1803 most of his family died in the interval of a few days. He was dismissed in December, 1807. He now resides in the northwest part of New York.

Rev. *Dudley Rossiter*, a native of Stonington, Con. and a graduate of Middlebury College, was ordained Jan. 1816, and dismissed in March, 1817. He preached but a very few sabbaths after his ordination on account of ill health.

Rev. *Calvin Foote*, a native of Colchester, Con. graduated at Middlebury College, in 1814, and was ordained Feb. 2, 1820.

The number of members belonging to the Congregational church is 70.

Dr. Coit was the practising physician in this town for 38 years. He was a native of Plainfield, Con. and died April 1813, aged 59. He was a man highly esteemed. His widow is still living. Dr. Norton, from Guilford, Con. practised a short time and died 1818.

I can find a record of only one from this town who has received a collegiate education. *Homer Moore*, son of Roger Moore, graduated at Yale College in 1806, studied law and removed to Ohio, where he soon after died.

Richard Dickinson who died in this town in 1824, in his last will appropriated \$17000 for the benefit of the schools. A sum not exceeding one half goes to the support of a grammar school, and the remainder to the district schools. The interest only is to be appropriated. The town have erected a building for the accomodation of the grammar school which is nearly completed. The school is soon to be opened—it is free to the youth of Southwick.



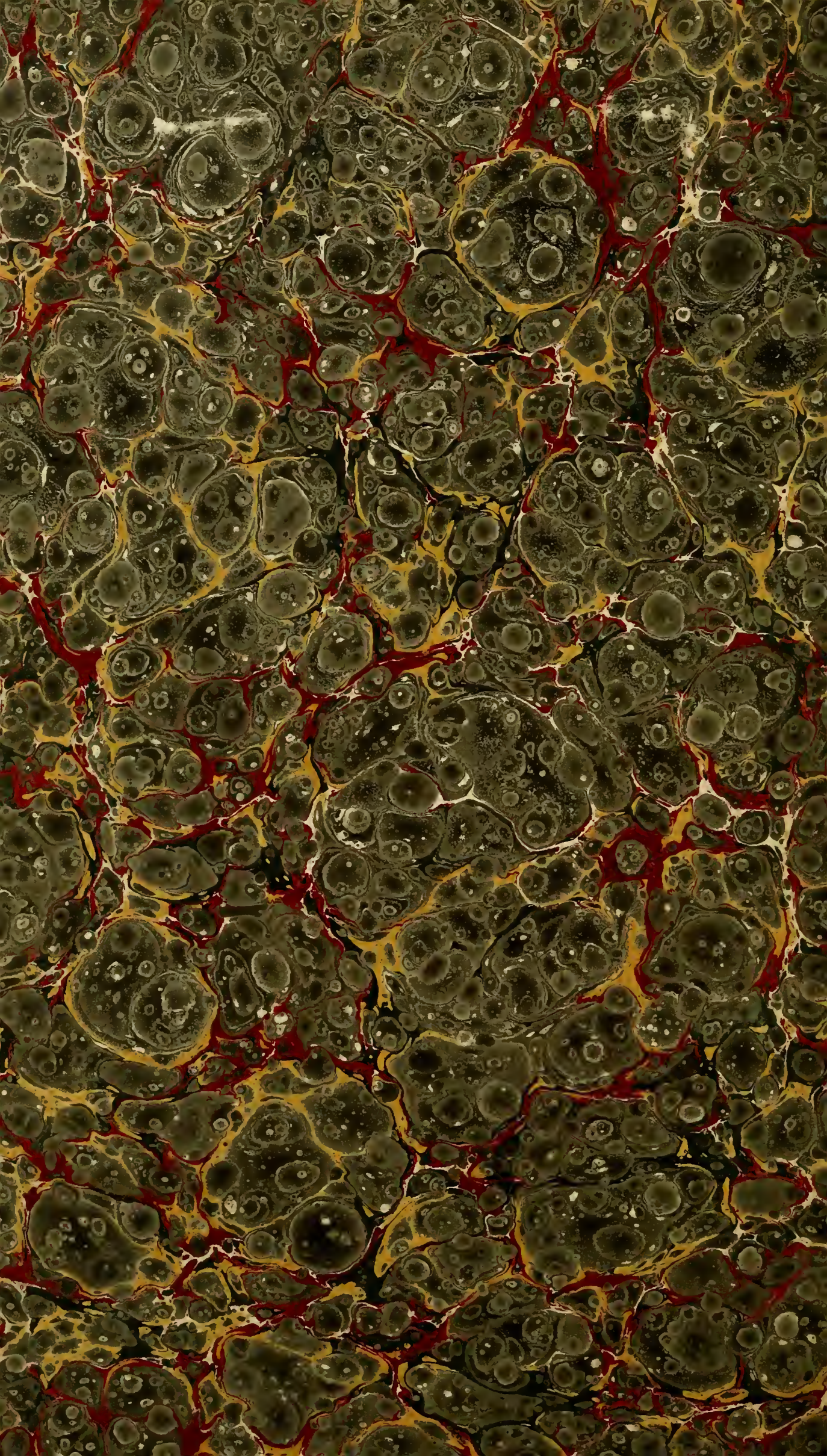






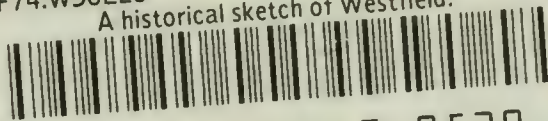








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